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## **News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Lt. Governor Kinder Signs Legislation Helping Missourians Stay Cool During Summer Months**

**ST. LOUIS** – Lt. Governor Peter Kinder today signed legislation establishing a hot weather rule to assist Missourians in need who are having difficulties paying their electric bills.

"In extreme weather, vulnerable Missourians are put at risk. Especially susceptible are the sick, elderly and the disabled, who often lack the mobility and resources to adequately handle extreme hot or cold weather," Lt. Governor Kinder said. "This legislation will make a real difference in the lives and quality of life for many Missouri families struggling to make ends meet."

Senate Bill 720, sponsored by Sen. Maida Coleman, establishes a hot weather rule during June 1st to September 30th, which states that natural gas or electricity companies are prohibited from disconnecting service to residential customers on days when the temperature is expected to rise above 95 degrees or the heat index is expected to rise above 105 degrees for a twenty-four hour period. Utility companies can no longer disconnect service on days when service personnel will not be available to reconnect service and the temperature or heat index is expected to rise above 95 degrees or 105 degrees.

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The legislation also increases the maximum amount, from \$600 to \$800 per year, that may be paid from the Utilicare Stabilization Fund to providers of heating or cooling on behalf of eligible households. Additionally, the legislation makes it mandatory that the Department of Social Services apply a portion of the funds appropriated to the Utilicare Stabilization Fund to the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program. The Weatherization Assistance Program helps lower-income Missourians with cost effective and safe improvements that help to ensure their safety.

"The excessive heat and humidity that Missourians experience during the summer months is not just uncomfortable — it is life-threatening," Sen. Coleman said. "Many Missourians cannot afford to keep their homes cool during severe conditions, and this legislation ensures that we will not turn our backs on them."

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